

# Wheat Ridge Youth Soccer: What To Expect



## Season Dates

The spring season typically starts with team practices in early to mid-March. League play usually begins the last weekend of March and runs for 8 weeks through early to mid-May. The fall season generally begins practices in mid-August with league play running from the first Saturday after Labor Day through the end of October.

## Registration

### Registration Dates

Wheat Ridge Youth Soccer adheres to the state-wide registration dates set by the Colorado Soccer Association, which typically starts earlier than many are accustomed to. Registration for the spring season typically starts as early as mid-December with returning players from the previous season having a grace period to return to their original teams until January 15th. Registration for the fall season usually begins in mid-April, with June 15th being the deadline for returning players to secure their original roster spots.

### Registration Process

You can register either online at [www.rootedinfun.com](http://www.rootedinfun.com) or by calling or visiting the Wheat Ridge Rec Center front desk.

**Early registration is very important.** Even if existing teams become mostly filled with returning players, remaining roster spots are then filled on a first come, first serve basis determined by date of registration. Once existing teams are filled, Athletics staff will begin forming new teams and recruiting volunteer parent coaches to oversee the teams. Players are placed onto teams based on year of birth, not current age or school grade.

**NOTE: Even though you have registered your child for the program, there is no guarantee you will receive a spot on a roster. Placement onto a team is based on our ability to find roster space for registered players and coaches for any new teams we are attempting to create.**

## Team Practices

Your child's coach will receive his or her official team roster at our pre-season coaches meeting. At that point, coaches will begin reaching out to let parents know when and where practices will take place. Older teams usually begin practicing a bit earlier (perhaps as early as 3 to 4 weeks out from the start of league play) while younger teams may wait another week or two. Most teams will practice at either a local park or school in Wheat Ridge though some teams choose to practice closer to where the majority of the team lives. For example, some of our teams have a large proportion of kids from north Denver. In this case they often choose a school or park in north Denver for team practices. Younger teams (U5 through U7) usually practice only once per week while older teams will typically meet twice per week.

## Games

Virtually all U5 through U8 games will take place at the Stenger Soccer Complex at W58th and Miller St. in Arvada, though U8 Wheat Ridge teams may play each other at Panorama Park on occasion. U9 and older teams play in what is called the Denver West League which includes teams from just five different soccer clubs located in Wheat Ridge, Arvada, Westminster, Golden. Starting in fall of 2021, Boulder County F.C. joined the Denver West as well.

The league normally tries to provide for eight league games. U9 and older teams will typically have 4 home games at either Kullerstrand Elementary School, Creekside Park or Panorama Park in Wheat Ridge. The remainder of the away games for these older teams would therefore take place "on the road" in Westminster, Arvada, Golden or Boulder. There is one other option sometimes chosen by the Head Coach. Colorado Soccer Association offers its Front Range League for age groups U9 and older. This league often provides for more competition and sometimes traveling to a wider range of clubs for away games.

## Game Schedules

This is often the first thing parents need and yet the last task the leagues complete! The leagues typically wait until the very last moment to schedule games, just in case there is a sudden influx of players and the need to form more teams. Our best advice is to do your very best to keep your Saturdays flexible until we get the schedules. Know also that if there are rainouts or an odd number of teams in your schedule, there could be reschedules on Sundays or weeknights. We expect schedules to be available (at the very minimum) a week to 10 days out from the start of the season. Once our Athletics Supervisor receives schedules, they will forward them IMMEDIATELY to head coaches for distribution to the parents.



# Proper Attire and Gear

As you know, the weather in Colorado can be fairly unpredictable. Make sure to follow the "layering" principal when gearing up for weeknight practices and weekend games. Your child can wear shorts, tee shirts, sweat pants, etc. for practices. Your child should also bring a light jacket and a water bottle and shin guards (very important) to practices. Having some sunscreen on hand is never a bad idea too!

We feel every player should have their own ball (much like a baseball or softball player has his or her own glove). Soccer balls are very inexpensive and having one at home encourages kids to play and practice away from the structure of our soccer program. U5 through U8 use a size 3 ball while U9 and older use size 4. Be sure to write your name on the ball if you bring it to practices. If your child doesn't have their own ball, don't sweat it! We have extra balls at practice.



## Uniforms

UNIFORMS NEED ONLY BE WORN FOR GAMES.

Our goal is always to provide the nicest uniforms for the lowest cost, and ALL savings are passed along to you. We have a close working relationship with Challenger Sports (the same folks we partner with to provide the Challenger Soccer Camps in the summer). Our relationship with Challenger benefits our patrons since we are able to broker a great uniform deal for the kids in our program. Wheat Ridge Parks & Recreation makes no profit from uniform sales.

The uniforms come in four parts (home jersey, away jersey, shorts and socks). Uniforms can be purchased as a package or as individual parts. Shin guards are also needed and we highly recommend plastic cleats as well (though U5 through U7 players might do OK simply wearing gym shoes). You can purchase shin guards and cleats at sporting goods and department stores or at the Challenger website.

## When to Purchase Uniforms

If you absolutely know your kiddo is going to love soccer, by all means don't delay; purchase the uniform ASAP to avoid a slowdown on delivery before the last minute rush kicks-in. If however you are not sure about this, perhaps wait at least until your child attends his or her first practice. The only pitfall with waiting is that the uniform may or may not arrive before the first scheduled game.

To purchase, visit Challenger Team Wear at:  
<https://www.challengerteamwear.com/store/wrpnr/index>

Thank you for your interest in joining our soccer program!

# Basic Communication and Field Closures

If Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation closes fields, it's usually because field conditions are unplayable. With a multitude of sports and fields in play throughout the season, some fields may be closed while others remain open at coach's discretion. While you are welcome to call our hotline, your Head Coach will probably make the "official" decision as to whether or not your practice is cancelled due to wet conditions or inclement weather. The only exception to this is with wholesale closures across the board, or specific fields that might be listed on our hotline.

No update on the hotline for a specific date means no official closure has been posted by the Parks and Recreation Department. Your coach may decide to cancel practices regardless. Keep in mind that the hotline only lists closures for fields located in Wheat Ridge (including weeknight practices and weekend games), it does not list game field cancellations for your away games. For that information you would call the host club's field hotline. Again, your coach will likely have a means for communicating important practice and game field status. For Wheat Ridge fields, call our **HOTLINE: 303-234-5928**

# Summer Soccer Camps

If your child is interested in participating in a fun, well managed skills camp next summer, we offer two Challenger British Soccer Camps. We typically have one camp each in the months of June and July. Check our website for confirmed dates each year. Both camps are usually scheduled on the large soccer field located at the Wheat Ridge Rec Center. Once registration opens, do a web search for Challenger Soccer Camps. Enter the Wheat Ridge zip of 80033 to find our camps.

